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**ENGL 574**

### **What are "Sentence Fragments"?**

A **sentence fragment** is a group of words which sounds like a sentence but does not express a complete thought. A complete sentence consists of an independent unit with at least a subject and a verb.

### **Why is it important to improve and address sentence fragments?**

Incomplete sentences, or sentence fragments, are normally not only grammatically incorrect but also difficult to understand. To find out if a sentence is a fragment, use the "is it true that...?" question test. There are five types of sentence fragments:

1. *A group of words without a subject and/or a verb*

**Ex 1 :** Author of *The Giver*, my favorite novel.  
*Is it true that author of *The Giver*, my favorite novel?*  
(Who is the author? This sentence lacks a subject. )

**Revised:** Lois Lowry is the author of *The Giver*, my favorite novel.  
*Is it true that Lois Lowry is the author of *The Giver*, my favorite novel?*

2. *An -ing verb without a form of the verb "to be"*

**Ex 2 :** Reading Lois Lowry's "*The Giver*".  
*Is it true that reading Lois Lowry's "*The Giver*"?*  
(Who is reading *The Giver*?)

**Revised:** I am reading Lois Lowry's "*The Giver*".  
*Is it true that I am reading Lois Lowry's "*The Giver*"?*

3. *Dependent clauses without an independent clause*

**Ex 3:** While I was reading "*The Giver*".  
*Is it true that while I was reading "*The Giver*"?*  
(What happened while I was reading?)

**Revised:** While I was reading "*The Giver*", I realized that it was my favorite novel.  
*Is it true that while I was reading "*The Giver*", I realized that it was my favorite novel?*

4. *Word groups beginning with conjunctions (and, for, so, or, yet, nor, \*note, one can begin a sentence with "But")*

**Ex 4:** So she read Lois Lowry's "*The Giver*".  
*Is it true that so she read Lois Lowry's "*The Giver*"?*  
(what purpose does the word "so" serve?)

**Revised:** She read Lois Lowry's "*The Giver*".  
*Is it true that she read Lois Lowry's "*The Giver*"?*

5. *Prepositional phrases unattached to independent clauses*

**Ex 5:** During Monday's recess.  
*Is it true that during Monday's recess?*  
(what happened during Monday's recess?)

**Revised:** During Monday's recess, she read Lois Lowry's "*The Giver*".  
*Is it true that during Monday's recess she read Lois Lowry's "*The Giver*"?*

Find and fix the following fragments!

Example: All of these rules and regulations should be made aware of.  
*Example Revised:* Athletes should be made aware of all these rules and regulations.

Because my ankle is sprained.

And we went to work.

After the football game.

Singing in the school choir.

Fragments are only appropriate in three situations.

1. Fragments can be used in advertising for emphasis.
2. Authors use fragments in creative writing because fragments imitate natural speech patterns. They can also become a part of a writer's style.
3. Fragments are acceptable in informal situations, such as personal letters and notes. However, a formal essay is not an informal situation.

For example, in conversation, people frequently use fragmented sentences.

"When are you going to do your homework?" asked Mom.

"After the football game," Rachel replied.

Notice that the phrase "after the football game" is a sentence fragment, yet it is okay in this specific context. The response is not a complete sentence, but it is understood because it is responding to a specific question.